

Indiana Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative is Conservation at its Best

Indianapolis – Dan Towery, an independent crop advisor, agronomist and former NRCS educator; and Hans Kok, a conservation tillage consultant and former Extension specialist, are Indiana's new Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI) team.

Les Zimmerman, co-chair of the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts' Natural Resources Committee said “The CCSI is an example of the Indiana Conservation Partnership at its best.”



Zimmerman says the CCSI consultants will work closely with farm operators around the state to encourage the adoption of long term continuous no-till practices utilizing cover crops, nutrient and pest management, precision farming technology, and the use of conservation buffers.

“These strategies employed together as a system will help maintain and increase production while preserving and enhancing our precious soil and water resources, reducing fuel consumption and optimizing input utilization in the bargain.”

Towery was a strong advocate for no-till cropping systems during the 10 years he was assigned by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to the Conservation Technology Information Center. From there he served as the Oregon Ryegrass Commission’s Midwest Project Manager for four years. He is the founder of Ag Conservation Solutions. Towery is a graduate of the University of Illinois.

Dr. Kok received bachelor’s and master’s degrees in science from the Agricultural University in The Netherlands, and a doctorate in Agricultural Engineering from the University of Idaho. Since 2004, Dr. Kok has worked on a joint appointment between Washington State University and the University of Idaho, covering Extension programming for conservation tillage and bioenergy for both Idaho and Washington. Prior to this Extension role, he worked as conservation tillage specialist for Monsanto for seven years.

From 1990 to 1998 he worked for the Kansas State Cooperative Extension Service as the state specialist for soil and water conservation. A native of the Netherlands, he has worked on erosion protection projects in Spain and Israel, and worked for the USDA-ARS in Washington State.

“Here in Indiana we have spent years talking about the chemical and physical properties of our soils. It is time to rediscover and unlock the power of biology within our soils,” added Zimmerman. “With the CCSI, Indiana has an opportunity to be a leader in the Midwest in addressing critical conservation tillage issues and other serious issues such as Gulf hypoxia, carbon sequestration and a reduction of fuel consumption.”